USDA NRCS
United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

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Watershed Operations

October 2009

# *Bear Creek Watershed, Iowa & Minnesota*

## Introduction

This project will reduce flooding and sedimentation, which adversely impact local infrastructure, crops and pasture. The area's unique wildlife and fishing habitat are also negatively impacted by the flooding and resulting heavy sedimentation in the cold water trout streams.


Bear Creek Watershed is located in Winneshiek & Allamakee Counties (IA); Houston and Fillmore Counties (MN).

Funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, this project is part of the Obama Administration's plans to modernize the nation's infrastructure, jump-start the economy, and create jobs. NRCS is using Recovery Act dollars to update aging flood control structures, protect and maintain water supplies, improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, and restore wetlands. NRCS acquires easements and restores floodplains to safeguard lives and property in areas along streams and rivers that have experienced flooding.

## Project Description

- **Location:** Winneshiek & Allamakee Counties (Iowa), 4th Congressional District; Houston and Fillmore Counties (Minnesota), 1st Congressional District
- **Federal Funding:** $755,000

This project will construct small flood control dams, as well as erosion and sediment control practices, and other land treatment measures. Some of these practices include terraces, livestock watering systems, tree plantings, and crop residue management.

## Partners

- USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Winneshiek County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Root River Soil and Water Conservation District
- Winneshiek County Board of Supervisors
- Houston County Board of Supervisors
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources

## Benefits

The small watershed dams will decrease damages and turbidity levels from floodwaters, and protect the area's unique cold water trout streams, which have become degraded. Erosion and sediment control practices protect water quality, increase pastureland, and promote wildlife habitat.

Terrace systems will help break long slopes into shorter ones, and usually follow the contour. Terraces reduce soil erosion, but can also provide nesting for wildlife.

## Bear Creek Watershed, Iowa & Minnesota

### Economic Opportunities

When completed, this project will contribute to the economic growth of the area by providing an estimated $845,000 of annual benefits.

### Statewide Perspective

Protecting cold water trout streams and limiting sedimentation will enhance trout and aquatic habitat. Reducing flooding, erosion and sediment delivery to the drainage area will positively impact the entire region.

### For More Information

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Livestock watering systems, such as animal powered nose pumps, will be used to draw water from ponds and streams. This keeps livestock out of the streams, to improve water quality.

Crop residue management practices, such as no-till, reduce soil erosion, improve soil quality, and provide cost inputs for farmers.

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